



COLORADO
Office of Early Childhood
Department of Human Services



Early Care and Learning Resources Study in Brief

Preliminary Study Highlights

Purpose

In 2006, both a nationwide as well as a Colorado-based study revealed alarming rates of exclusionary discipline in early care and learning settings ^{1, 2}

- Children 0-5 were being expelled at 3x the rate as those K-12

National and local conversation

- News
- Community partners
- Parents and teachers
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants

Primary project aims

- Characterize use of suspension and expulsion
- Assess available and needed resources for challenging behaviors



Study Methodology

4YR Process

- Study design and survey feedback (2015-2018)
- Implementation and data collection (2019)

Survey

- Distributed to 50% of licensed early care programs in Colorado
- 663 providers responded (29% response rate)
- ~20,000 children 0-5 represented

Focus Groups

- Provider (1 in-person; 2 statewide, virtual discussions)
- Parent (1 statewide, virtual discussion)



Key Findings-Rates

Suspensions 17.4 per 1,000

Expulsions 3.7 per 1,000

Those at highest risk for suspension and expulsion:

- Males
- 5-6 year olds
- 2-3 year-olds (*expulsion only*)
- And children with additional needs (IFSPs/IEPs)(*suspension only*)

Most frequently stated reason for removing a child:

- Hurting others
- Destroying property or breaking furniture/equipment

Higher risk settings:

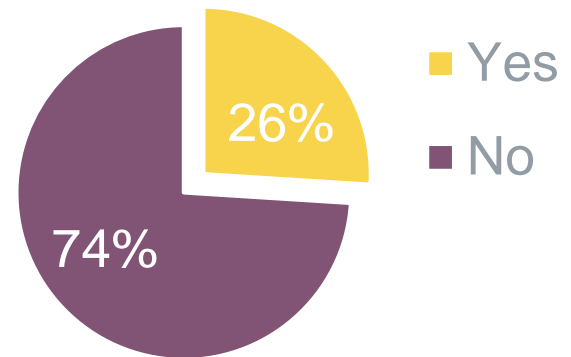
- Center-based > Home-based
- Lower QRIS-rated > Higher QRIS-rated



Key Findings-Supports

- Providers expressed a desire for more in-classroom support and coaching around challenging behaviors
- Promisingly, 65% of providers were aware of consultation and most found it easy to access (86%)
- **Rationale for low utilization:**
 - Too few consultants
 - Lack of sustainable funding/available consultants
 - Not well advertised
 - Long wait times

Was an IECMHC involved prior to the decision to suspend or expel?



Action Steps

- 1) Increase awareness and knowledge of positive and preventative early childhood mental health practices
 - Train providers
 - Decrease mental health stigma broadly
- 2) Increase the ECMH workforce
 - Expand access
 - Reduce wait times
- 1) Direct in-class supports and resources to settings and populations at highest risk for suspensions and expulsions
 - Increased funding for consultation and coaching
- 2) Dig deeper into this phenomenon
 - Understand populations and rates
 - Understand the programs and supports that reduce early childhood removals

